

"This month
[Abib]
Shall stand at the head of your calendar,
You shall reckon it the first month of the year"
Exodus 12: 2.

Megiddo Message

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Kenneth E. Flowerday, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone, The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will.

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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Should Christians Celebrate Christ's Birth?

While someone may protest that there is no direct command to commemorate Christ's birth, we consider it proper to do so, not on a pagan feast day, not by pagan practices, but on a day of special significance to God's people, and by deeds or services befitting the occasion. And while it is absolutely paramount that Christ be honored in our lives every moment of every day, it is by no means out of harmony with true Christian principle to observe a special day devoted wholly to honoring Christ. The apostle Paul said that we should render "honor to whom honor is due," and honor is indeed due to Christ, more than any mortal man of past or present ages.

When Jesus was born the event was of such significance that angels announced the news to the shepherds, saying: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." And when the angel had delivered his message there joined him a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God, and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Also the "wise men" were guided by a "star," an angelic being, to the newborn King, whom, when they found, they worshiped.

We can praise God with the angels because of the birth, life and work of Christ and rejoice with them in the promise they uttered at His ascension: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

From: "Christ the Saviour is Born." Send for this free leaflet for evidence concerning Christ's birth.

Letters

Bereaved

Dear Ones at the Mission,

Just a line to let you all know that I still love the MESSAGE and its truths that it contains.

My wife, Daisy, departed this life on October 18, and both of the boys within a month and three days of each other, so I am left alone.

Raton, N. Mex.

S. N.

Search, Found

Dear Megiddo Mission:

I would not want to be without the MESSAGE. Only those who live far from the Mission Home can appreciate how much it means to us, the comfort it brings, in every way; the truth that is spread over its pages is truly one of our blessings.

Fort Johnson, N. Y.

Mrs. J. F. B.

Comfort

Dear Friends,

Of all the magazines and pamphlets I have been reading, your little magazine seems to be just the one I have been searching for.

I have been reading from the little booklet; [The coming of Jesus and Elijah] it is truthful too.

Lynn, Mass.

Mrs. E. C. C.

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Announcement

The next event of significance in the spring cluster of events of Bible time, is the anniversary of the Passover or night on which Jesus met with His disciples to partake of the Last Supper. This occurred on the beginning of Abib 13 which falls this year on the evening of April 27. The resurrection of the Saviour occurring on Abib 15th falls on April 29. More about these events will be published in our next issue.

When Christ Was Born

"THE CROWNING fulfillment of prophecy in the Bible lies in the multiplied predictions not merely of a future event, but of a future person. And that Person is predicted in His character and work with a wealth of detail, and an accuracy of description that is unequaled in literature. Canon Hague says: 'Centuries before Christ was born, His birth and career, His sufferings and glory, were all described in outline and detail in the Old Testament. Christ is the only person ever born into this world whose ancestry, birth-time, forerunner, birth-place, birth manner, infancy, manhood, teaching, character, career, preaching, reception, rejection, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, were all written in the most marvelous manner centuries before He was born.'

"Who could draw a picture of a man not born yet? Surely God could, and God alone. Nobody knew 500 years ago that Shakespeare was going to be born; or 250 years ago that Napoleon was to be born; or 200 years ago that Queen Victoria was to be born. Yet here in the Bible we have the most striking and unmistakable likeness of a Man portrayed, not by one, but by twenty or twenty-five artists, none of whom had ever seen the Man they were painting. Beginning with faint touches in the books of Moses, Christ's whole career is described, the pictures becoming more and more precise as the time of fulfillment draws near."

It was just before his death, when blessing his sons, that the patriarch Jacob spoke of the "Shiloh" or Messiah that would spring from Judah. God, speaking through Moses, said: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." Another of God's spokesmen of that time also prophesied: "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel."

The prophet Isaiah foretold His birth by a virgin: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (7: 14). And Jeremiah also adds his testimony: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch" (23: 5).

No less a personage than the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she should be the mother of the Messiah, that she should bring forth a son called Jesus, and that He should be born to be a king. The familiar announcement to the shepherds by the angels marks the culmination of all those prophecies. At last this holy Child was born, and on that auspicious night so long ago a multitude of the heavenly host sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

In celebrating Christ's birth at this time of the year we are departing from a custom long held sacred by the major portion of the so-called Christian world. But we must remember that acceptance by the great number of people over a long period of time does not prove that accepted belief true. There is not the slightest proof that Christ was born on the 25th of December, and much to disprove it. The shepherds were watching their flocks by

night when the angel of the Lord appeared to them; something they could not have been doing during the cold, rainy season common for the month of December in Palestine. The Roman government had ordered a census to be taken for tax purposes, and each family was to go from its country or village home to the town from which their family originated, and register. Mary and Joseph were complying with this law of enrollment when they journeyed to Bethlehem. With no improved roads or transportation system as we have today, such travel would have been nearly impossible in December.

But there was another reason besides registering which impelled them to make the trip. We learn from reading the account of the conversation between Jonathan and David at the time the jealous king Saul was attempting to take the life of David, that a yearly feast or celebration for all the family of David was held at Bethlehem at the season of the new moon of Abib, the first month of the sacred year; therefore both Joseph and Mary, being of the house or lineage of David, had journeyed to Bethlehem to attend this feast. Due to this celebration there were so many people gathered together that there was no room left in the inn, and Mary and Joseph were obliged to take lodging in a stable. And there, in circumstances so devoid of all earthly comfort or splendor that it is impossible to imagine a humbler nativity, Christ was born. A stable seemed a more fitting place for Him who was born to teach man humility before exaltation.

Here, the shepherds, having heard the celestial announcement, discovered the lodging-place of Joseph and Mary, with her infant cradled in the designated spot. Upon this identification, they related what the angel had declared unto them would be the character of the Child. The account astonished all the hearers except Mary, who treasured up this new incident with a mother's fond reflection.

Not only are we separate in celebrating Christ's birth on the first day of Abib, but also the New Year, as alluded to earlier in this article, and for which the Bible gives specific evidence.

In Exodus 12: 2 we read: "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." The name of this first month of the year, we find in verse 4 of the following chapter: "This day came ye out in the month Abib." God's people were given the command in Deut. 16: 1 to "observe the month Abib." This first month of God's year is sometimes called Nisan as well as Abib. The meaning of this word "month" is given in the Hebrew Lexicon as: "The new moon, the day of the new moon. . . which was a festival of the ancient Hebrews. A lunar month beginning at the new moon." The meaning of the name "Abib" is given as: "The month of green ears, beginning at the new moon of April or March. The first month of the old year as instituted on coming out of the land of Egypt; it also denotes the month of flowers."

January was never the beginning of God's year, and not even of the old Roman year which always began in the spring.

The custom of celebrating Christ's birth on the popu-
(Continued on page 9)

Day-tight Compartments

THE WHEELS of time are moving us on to a new year. What this year holds in store for us we know not. God has wisely hidden the future from our eyes. We live in a world of uncertainty. Our life, as said the practical James, is as a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away, and we do not know the vanishing point.

We have no assurance that our allotted time shall be sixty, seventy, seventy-five, or eighty years. The strides taken by medical science during recent years have greatly lengthened the life span, but have not removed the certainty of ultimate death. Death still stalks the land, and is just as real at seventy-five years as it was at fifty-five. Then, there are more causes for accidental death now than in former years. As the tempo of life and the speed of mechanical transportation has been increased, the hazards of existence have increased. And besides, living as we are near the close of the day of salvation, our working time may be terminated at any moment by the appearing of the great Judge.

With mankind as a whole the question is, "Where is the promise of his coming, . . . all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation?" They are not aware that Christ will ever come, hence do not concern themselves about that prospect. To the indifferent and negligent among those who claim to be a part of the body of Christ, it is easy to adopt the attitude: "My Lord delayeth his coming," so why should I impose upon myself the mental strain to live in perpetual expectancy?

For this new year we shall need faith to carry us through. Doubt will persist in saying, "Take it easy, there is time enough yet; relax and give yourself a breathing spell, you are taking your Christian hope too seriously." Faith's ready answer will be, "Get thee hence, Satan, I cannot be influenced by your defeatist pronouncements, there is too much at stake, not one moment can be lived in complacency. Eternal life hangs in the balance. I must strain every nerve to enter the strait gate that leads to life."

At this the beginning of a new year there is nothing we need more than a *way* of life, a way in which to live throughout this coming year; but it cannot be just *any* way, it must be a *right* way. This probing for a way of life is reminiscent of the plan of action employed by Ezra the priest, when he called a fast, and besought the Lord that He would establish a right way for him and his people. So at this the beginning of a new year it should be our aim to be shown the *right way*. The Psalmist supplicated: "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path."

Perhaps there could be no better plan for the year's living than to aim to live right one day at a time. A learned man, who had a practical philosophy of life, once stated what he considered a workable plan for superior living. It was so simple, it might seem disappointing: it was to live one day at a time. He said: "The way of life that I preach is a habit to be acquired gradually by long and steady repetition. It is the practice of living for the day only, and for the day's work, living in 'day-tight compartments.' The chief worries of life arise from the foolish habit of looking before and after."

A short time before this man had crossed the ocean on a first-class ocean liner. As he was conversing with the Captain on the bridge, as the ship was plowing through the water at twenty-five knots, the Captain said: "She is alive in every plate, a huge monster with brains and nerves, an immense stomach, a wonderful heart and lungs, and a splendid system of locomotion." Just at that moment a signal sounded, and all over the ship the watertight compartments were closed. "Our chief factor of safety," said the Captain.

Now each of us is a much more marvelous organization than the great ocean liner, and bound on a longer voyage. What we need is to so learn to control the machinery as to live with day-tight compartments; it is the most certain way to insure safety on the voyage. "Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand." Let us get on the bridge, and see that at least the great bulkheads are in working order. Touch a button and hear, at every level of your life, the iron doors shutting out the *Past*—the dead yesterdays. Touch another and shut off, with a mental curtain, the *Future*—the unborn tomorrows. Then you are safe, safe for Today.

"The load of tomorrow, added to that of yesterday, carried today makes the strongest falter . . . Waste of energy, mental distress, nervous worries, dog the steps of a man" who is overanxious about tomorrow. "Shut close, then, the great fore-and-aft bulkheads, and prepare to cultivate the habit of a life in day-tight compartments!"

It is not prudent for us to try to drag all our unworthy past into the oncoming year. There is a limit to our strength and endurance. God doesn't ask us to carry a load above that which we are able to bear. A good motto might be, let "by-gones be by-gones." Paul the great apostle lived in a day-tight compartment. He had one major concern—and made all else subservient to it—that he might win for himself acceptance at the hand of the Judge, and eternal salvation. All else he promptly forgot. His formula for success was: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We cannot live in the past, and still make progress today.

It is for us to remember our own evil ways, and our doings which have not been good, so we can correct them; remember our past unworthiness so we can know where to make changes in our lives. But to brood over our past sins is destructive to the spiritual life.

The mistakes of our lives have been many. Who of us can witness that we have never spoken an untimely word, or unintentionally hurt another's feelings; found ourselves on the wrong side of a proposition when we meant to be on the right side, or mistakenly blamed another for doing something that we ourselves were to blame for. But let us not try to carry all these mistakes along with us through each day of the oncoming year. Let us shut the doors to the past, but guard well each day-tight compartment—the precious moment in our immediate possession.

Let us forget the trials that we have passed through, the temptations, the tribulations, the reverses; the times when we thought we were doing well and had to suffer for it. And above all else let us shut out the miserable hurt feelings, the product of the occasions when we suffered injury—fancied or real—and perhaps thought that we would “not get over it for a long time.” It is impossible to make progress in the divine life with the weight of all past days dragging us back. Let us shut ourselves into a day-tight compartment, and there work with a will.

Let us close our bulkheads on our tomorrows. Let us not build air castles, or day-dream, or try to rationalize ourselves into holiness. Let us not procrastinate, or put off the rendering of our bodies a living sacrifice until some future time, thinking it will be easier, less confining, less restricting, less painful—or perhaps we can find a way to bypass it altogether. “*Tomorrow* is the day when idlers work, and fools reform,” and the laggards run in the race for eternal life. Procrastination is a theft of time. The Christian’s duty is to redeem the time, to use it, not squander it.

Does the fear of tomorrow make a coward of us, so that we are afraid to take a step in the dark? Are we fearful to—like Abraham—fare forth into new territory, not knowing whither we are going?

If we attempt to live in tomorrow, and see away down to the end of what appears to be an endless road, we may be overwhelmed, and lose heart. Let us preoccupy ourselves with the taking of the steps that must be taken today. The most rugged footman could not cover a thousand miles in a day, but he might cover forty. “Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” Let us place extra emphasis on that word *now*. One step toward the kingdom, actually taken, is worth more than a hundred anticipated steps, with both feet motionless on the ground.

And God grant that we may not indulge in the destructive practice of crossing bridges before we come to them. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,” said the Great Teacher.

Living in day-tight compartments is recommended as the perfect formula for the successful life, it is the assured way to get things done. And the spiritual life is no exception to the rule. The busy man must budget his time or he will fail to keep his schedule. The Christian also must budget his time, for of all men he is the busiest.

He is a *soldier*, fighting a perpetual battle against his worst self. The new man is determined to take the life of the old man, the old man is determined to take the life of the new man. His hands must be taught to war, and his fingers to fight. His survival depends upon it.

The Christian, like his Master is a *worker*—“work . . . while it is today: the night cometh, when no man can work.” We are admonished to “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.” Analogous with the thought of working are such verbs as “strive,” “press,” “run,” “flee.” “Strive to enter in at the strait gate.” “The kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” “I will run the way of thy commandments.” “Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul.” And above all, Jesus said, “My Father worketh hither to, and I work.”

Furthermore, the active Christian must be a *watchman*, each waking moment of every day he must be on guard. And even more, he must be watching *night* and *day*. Said

the prophet Isaiah: “I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights.” The wholesale coverage in the schoolbook rime: “When alone we have our thoughts to watch, when at home our tempers, when in society our tongues,” is timely, though it lacks much in detail. We have much more than that to watch.

We must *watch* lest coming suddenly the Master of the house finds us sleeping.

We must *watch* our tempers so as to comply with the command: “Cease from anger and forsake wrath.”

Then we must *watch* pride, it appears in many different guises: pride of position, pride of accomplishment, pride of one’s own point of view, pride of station. Pride in appearance, pride in possession, pride of one’s standing in his community.

We must *watch* discontent. Paul said: “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” We must watch to see that we are content to stay in the narrow way God has prescribed for us, glad to surrender everything of the present for everything beyond.

We should *watch* self-importance. We inherently suffer from a fear complex. We are afraid our real worth will not be recognized, we are apprehensive lest others do not give us a just rating in importance, so to play safe we feel that we must rate ourselves high. God forbids this. “For I say . . . to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly.” Truly, we will be as busy as beavers in our day-tight compartment!

Then we must *pray*. Prayer in itself is a nearly full time job. The command is, “Pray without ceasing.” In other words, let us always maintain a prayerful attitude.

Let us spend this coming year, or whatever part of it may be allotted to us, in day-tight compartments, with each moment lived well. Let us shut our doors on today, all the yesterdays closed away from us, and all our tomorrows left in the hands of a loving Father who doeth all things well, then, paradoxically enough, by doing this, we will actually be living in tomorrow, living for that greater Tomorrow, world without end in God’s Kingdom.

Each day has its own duty, its own smile, its own tear, its own heartthrob. If only it be lived in for eternity, life will be fuller and richer in everything; “and the clusters of blessedness hanging from the bough of each day would proclaim life’s every season to have wrought well, and to deserve well what lies before.”

Give your *today* a chance. Give it only its own work to do, and the close of your day of salvation will find you rejoicing over the beauty and faithfulness that smiles up to you as you hear “Well done” from the lips of the Great Judge, and the eternal Morrow will meet you with kisses of tenderness, and you will enjoy the felicities of bliss with the good of all ages through a blissful eternity.

JUST DO IT . . . AND SMILE

What good did it do—to be grouchy today,
Did your surliness drive any troubles away?
Did you cover more ground than you usually do?
Because of the grouch that you carried with you?
If not, what’s the use of a grouch or a frown,
If it won’t smooth a path or a grim trouble drown?
If it doesn’t assist you, it isn’t worth while,
Your work may be hard, but just do it—and smile.

OPPORTUNITIES UNLIMITED

A Dramatic Study of the Lives of Six Bible Characters as once presented in the Megiddo Mission Church.

Its Lesson is the glory of God's Second Chance.

From unpromising and even hopeless beginnings, men have risen and may yet rise to the heights of character and achievement, by the power of faith and the help of the Eternal.

"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof." Eccl. 7: 8.



Character Six

JOHN

Part I—Grief and Remorse

The black depths of despair come to every life soon or late, seldom or often, but they come. Shattered hopes and definite knowledge of stark failure, plunge one very deep. The higher and more worthy the hopes, the deeper the despair and discouragement. But the situation entirely without hope is rare indeed. Tomorrow's dawn will surely come. When failure is our portion we can take courage. God never fails and if we serve Him faithfully, we cannot fail permanently.

Such is the force of tradition that we are inclined to think of the apostle JOHN as almost another species, too good for this world, far beyond our reach, utterly unlike the very human Peter.

Yet the known facts do not justify this picture. JOHN, too, had his troubles. Not for nothing did Jesus name him a "son of thunder." Unlawful pride and ambition more than once led him into transgression; a somewhat vindictive nature earned him more than one sharp rebuke.

JOHN, too, slept in Gethsemane; he, too, ran for his life when his Lord was taken. Yet even these grave lapses were forgiven, by the grace of God's Second Chance.

Jesus had the rare ability, as in the case of Peter, to see what a man might become, in spite of what he was. Knowing the glory of the future, He forgave the failures of the present.

Tradition makes him the "disciple whom Jesus loved," and it may well be so. Jesus' love was never misdirected, and it was not by chance or caprice that JOHN became one of the "inner circle." The makings of a great man were there, ready to be developed by the storms of life's racking experiences and the sunshine of an understanding love.

JOHN, too, needed the second chance; and he, too, made the most of it.

It is the close of the black day of the Crucifixion. JOHN, in utter despair, faces a bleak future with only his brother JAMES to comfort him.

But, "better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof." The one ray of hope visible is that of being needed.



SPEAKERS:

JOHN

JAMES

It is night, in the simple furnished home of Zebedee's sons. A lamp burns overhead. The two brothers sit at a table in deep dejection, it being the evening after the Crucifixion.

JOHN: And so—He's dead. It's all over.

JAMES: Yes, it's all over. I never thought it would end like this.

JOHN: How bright our hopes were, all those three years—those three wonderful years. We believed He was the Messiah, the King. James, He *must* have been. He would not deceive us. But why did it have to end like this?

JAMES: I don't know, Brother. I cannot think clearly; all my life like yours, is in ruins. We loved him so. . . The ways of God are strange. We knew He was a teacher sent from God, but—

JOHN: When we saw Lazarus come forth from the tomb, it seemed certain that the Kingdom was at hand.

JAMES: Who could fail to believe, in the presence of such mighty power? But what was the end of it all? He saved others; Himself He could not save.

JOHN: How He suffered!—even though it was cut short by death. [*arises and walks about in abject despair*] Would that I could have borne His sufferings for Him! Would that I could have died in His place! Life is unbearable without Him . . . But in my heart I know I am not worthy to suffer in His place.

JAMES: Why do you say that, Brother John?

JOHN: Why? Why are *none* of us worthy? Because we forsook Him in the hour of His need, because we ran away, afraid of what man could do to us. [*disgustingly*] We will bear the shame of it to the end of our days.

JAMES: He must have forgiven you. It was a great honor He gave you today—the care of His mother.

JOHN: Too great. I am unworthy. What can I say to her? How can I console her—*coward* that I was?

JAMES: Now, John, you must control yourself. After what we have been through, we can't help feeling let down, and the future looks black. But tomorrow will come.

JOHN: Will it?

JAMES: Yes, Brother, you can't hold back the dawn. Tomorrow will surely come, and—who knows?—it may be better.

JOHN: Or worse.

JAMES: The future is in the hands of God. It is for us to adjust ourselves to His plan. Life must go on.

JOHN: How can it go on, James? What is there to live for?

JAMES: You have much to live for. I am satisfied that God still has a great work for you, somehow, somewhere. You have Mary, the Lord's mother. And you have me. I'm depending on you, Brother. You can't quit.

JOHN: Promise me, James, that if anything happens to me, you will take good care of her.

JAMES: Of course I will. But nothing's going to happen to you. Tomorrow you will—

JOHN: *[with feeling]* Tomorrow! How can there be a tomorrow for me? I, who was the beloved of the Lord Jesus Christ, I, who slept while He prayed in His agony, and ran away when His enemies came to take Him. I have failed. How can the Eternal ever trust me again? What is there left—

[A bell tinkles softly in inner room. They rise]

JAMES: It is Mary. Go, John; she needs you. Try to help her.

[JOHN goes through door, his head up, brought back to life by the simple fact of being needed.]



Part II—Ecstatic Experience

A man who failed and ran away was used of God to bring to us the most hopeful book in the Bible, Revelation, a preview of the future. But he stopped running and faced up to his failure.

The last historical glimpse we have of JOHN as an apostle is that of coadministrator in the growing church of Jerusalem, at the time of the first general conference.

Tradition, probably reliable in most points, gives him a long and eventful life. There is little doubt that at some time he left Jerusalem and settled in Ephesus. In the persecution under Domitian he is said to have been taken to Rome and miraculously preserved from martyrdom (this being the least likely feature of the tradition). He is then sent to labor in the mines of Patmos, where we now see him.

If indeed, as we believe, the Revelator of Patmos is the

same individual as John the apostle, the glorious privilege of being the vehicle of the Eternal's last message to humanity is a fitting reward for a long life of outstanding service.

Revelation is also the most misunderstood book in the Bible, officially held to be a book of mystery and shunned by many. Its claim is simple. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein . . ." (1: 3). Only investigation, understanding and doing can make us eligible for God's promised blessings.

SPEAKERS:

JOHN

TWO ANGELS

VOICES

JOHN is an old man, on Patmos. There are thunderings and lightnings, voices, winds, crashes, flashes of variegated colors simulating celestial radiance, suggesting the state of ecstatic experience as the Apocalyptist receives the divine Message.

VOICE: I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia . . . *[JOHN turns and beholds, and after a long, rapturous look, he kneels and bows his head].*

VOICE: Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

[He writes at table . . . Angel appears]

ANGEL 1: Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

JOHN: *[standing and looking into distance]* And I looked, and Lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

[Musical background]

And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth.

These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

[With thunder or appropriate music] And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice,

VOICE: Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come.

[Second Angel appears. Turbulent music, crashing, wailing]

ANGEL 2: Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

VOICES: *[in concert offstage, to joyful music]* Alleluia, *(Continued on page 10).*

❖ A New Year ❖

EVERY NEW DAY that we are permitted to arise to greet the dawn is to us a fresh token from Heaven of the mercy of God.

It is with hearts full of thankfulness that all who love life should welcome the dawning of the New Year. LIFE is our assurance that there is yet a place for us to fill, a purpose to our existence. The very fact that God is extending this time to us is a token of our capacity for greater things than we have yet attained, more spirituality than we have yet developed. There are duties we must yet perform for God and for our fellow men.

LIFE is a challenge to us to avail ourselves of the opportunities with which God surrounds us each new day. Vain is that existence that spends itself in listlessness, drifting, the pursuit of pleasure, of earthly fame, or wealth, or station.

High and holy are the purposes to which God has called us. Yet how often we forget, and let the days and the years slip by in meaningless fashion.

The goal of our life lies beyond this mortal existence, in the Kingdom of God, where there will be no care, no sorrow, sickness, pain, or death, and where no sin shall ever enter, but all will be love, peace, and purity. **MAY WE NEVER FORGET THIS SO LONG AS LIFE LASTS!** And may we bend every energy while there yet remains an ounce of energy within us to fulfill that purpose for which our days are meant!

Temporal cares are the portion of all. With the wisdom of God guiding our lives, they become spiritual responsibilities. Our lot may be placed amid unpleasant surroundings; sickness or ill health may be our portion. These things can test and temper our faith, but *they need never crush it!*

As life is given us of God for a high and glorious purpose, so every circumstance of life is likewise arranged of Him for our spiritual development, designed to temper and strengthen us where we are weakest.

Iron wills we must have, with the ability to remain true to our calling amid storm and sunshine.

"In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.
It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul."

These lines from Henley's *Invictus* portray the spirit of the people of God. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God"—and the saints in whose foreheads that word is sealed—"shall stand forever."

The Prophet foretold a "day of small things," just preceding the great Day of the Lord. That day is now upon us. It is not a day for spectacular heroism, for plunging into battles or marching as a martyr to the stake. It is a time for crucifying "the flesh with the affections and lusts," "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought

to the obedience of Christ." Humbleness of mind, kindly care for one another's spiritual welfare, rebuking in love, are qualities that go unnoticed and unsung; yet they are not forgotten. Angels are scribing them down in the Book of Life. There they identify the heroes of this the greatest age in the history of the world. It is men and women with qualities like these that God is selecting to be the builders of a kingdom that shall stand forever.

While we have the use of our mind, and life and breath in our being, is aught that God requires of us beyond the power of our performing? Our reason answers, *It is not!* And the Word of God is in accord with reason. In that Word the Almighty promises, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." The highest reaches of holiness; the unending ranges of God's wisdom; power, strength, and life immortal are within the power of our own will!

Humanity at large is adrift upon the great sea of life. But not so the Christian mariner. He plows the stormy main in steady, straightforward motion. Moons may wax and wane. Now the sea is calm—then turbulent. But still that patient traveler plies the mighty deep in one unchanging direction. While the many drift, he drives; though surrounded by an atmosphere of spiritual apathy, he is full of action, for there is work to do. *That is what he is here for!*

As we greet this New Year that comes to us laden with opportunities, may God grant us the perception to recognize them, and to use them wisely, that we may obtain blessings more choice, and pleasures infinitely superior to all that lies about us now. And let us have grace to render thanks to the Giver now and always for the Truth that has given purpose to our existence, and that teaches us how to live this life that is ours!

For Abib 1st—A Home Service for You

ORDER OF SERVICE

Hymn: "Holy, Everlasting God." No. 94, Megiddo Hymn Book.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 72.

Prayer

Hymn: "Zion's King Will Come." No. 211, Megiddo Hymn Book.

Address: "Day-tight Compartments."

Hymn:

Benediction:

This may be varied with suitable readings from former Abib 1st. issues, and with the addition of instrumental selections and songs or special selections as time and circumstance permit.

Men with the victorious attitude cannot be downed. They may stumble, fall and fail, but their eyes are not on the mud at their feet but on the stars above their heads.

Father and mother rear their family more by example than by precept.

Space Travel With Celestial Destination

NOT SO MANY years ago, when many of us were children, we did not think of flying around in rockets or sputniks or any other mechanical device. We wanted to be up there in the sky, all right, but without support.

We would say, "Oh! wouldn't it be thrilling if we could fly like the birds and be free?"

Far from our childish thoughts were trips into space, all dressed up in some cumbersome, queer-looking suits with plastic helmets. Military bases on the moon and platforms in space, from which to launch deadly rockets against our enemies, never once entered into our innocent minds. We didn't have any enemies. We just wanted to sprout some wings or something of the sort, stretch them, and then, feel the fresh, cool air of the wide stretches of glory rushing past us. We wanted to enjoy the wondrous freedom of flying as the birds of the air.

But according to the testimony of our Lord, we mortal beings are earth-bound until the Lord shall come from Heaven with a shout, and the voice of an archangel and the dead in Christ shall rise first; and then, those which are alive shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so get to be with the Lord.

In this present world, man is closed in by mountains and streams, locked in by cities, cooped up in houses and apartments, and sometimes, nearly suffocated by smog; but he still wants freedom. And because the mind and spirit of man are not shackled by physical boundaries, that tie him in, he dreams of and responds to the challenge of the limitless reaches of space. He needs support; so, he goes to work and builds the most powerful machines which he hopes will take him up to the moon and on to Venus and Jupiter.

"Just watch us," they say. "See, we are anchored in our space ship on the surface of a distant planet. We stop just long enough to inquire and explore; then, we are off again into the realms of space. There are many perilous difficulties to be sure; but it is adventure, and man likes adventure."

Each of the great powers are spending billions of dollars to be the first to land a space ship on the moon or one of the other heavenly worlds.

Could it be that mortal, sinful man thinks a space ship safely anchored on another planet would put him closer to heaven or even nearer to God? Maybe so; but we, who have our understanding enlightened by the spirit of truth, know that no evil thing will ever enter into those celestial worlds of the Eternal.

Some day man will reach God and His Heavens, but will he span the great gulf of space that stretches between this world and paradise in a space ship? Never. How, then, will we ever behold God in all His glory? There is only one way. We must step into the laboratory of spiritual research and heed the instructions of earth's one and only space Captain, the Lord Jesus Christ:

First, we hear the words of our Master plainly saying, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, and if any man try to enter in any other way, he is a thief and a robber."

There we have our first and greatest lesson of how to follow Jesus into the realms of space. We must purify

ourselves, even as He is pure. And to the faithful of ours, the Adamic race, the promise is, the earth made like heaven for our eternal home—but—also promised is: Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."

St. Paul admonishing all would-be Bible space travelers says, "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works" (Titus 2: 13—14).

The apostle John also tells us, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3: 2, 3).

Our Master speaks again and says, "And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matt. 24: 31).

Yes, the angels of the Almighty are going to gather together His elect in that soon coming day and at an appointed time in the future ages escort them right through to the Paradise of God.

Oh, what a space travel that will be! With these great and precious promises, we all should eagerly press into this divine research, that our dreams as a child may be fulfilled, after we have fitted ourselves for that wonderful space trip into the realms of eternity.

So, may God help us to keep the faith and finish our course, that we may be victorious in the end and receive our traveler's check with this endorsement:

"The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary, there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

When Christ Was Born

(Continued from page 3)

larly accepted date has become so established by centuries of practice that it requires great moral courage to abandon the wrong time as well as manner, and remember God's commandments to observe them on this point as on every other, and practice by word and deed that which can be verified and proved true without a doubt. Love of truth must be deeply seated in the heart in order to enable individuals to change their minds when the change is against the prevailing views of the entire social and religious world. We must, however, allow reason to rule, think God's thoughts and be governed by evidence alone.



From the deepest pit we may see the stars.

From the pit of failure we may still look up and see the stars that are our ideals and aims, twinkling above us and sending us a message which says, "Come on, get up, and climb again!"

Opportunities Unlimited

(Continued from page 6)

for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

ANGEL 1: And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

ANGEL 2: Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

[JOHN falls at feet of angel]

ANGEL 2: [raising him up] See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; worship God.

[There is a long, crescendo of rolling thunder ending with a crash and rapturous musical sounds, as JOHN speaks in a spirit of awe and great wonderment]

JOHN: And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

ANGEL 1: Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they shall reign with him a thousand years.

[There is a crescendo of majestic music, as the three on stage gaze raptly at some thrilling sight. Music softens, but continues as background.]

JOHN: And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying,

VOICE: Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

VOICE 2: BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW . . . WRITE, FOR THESE WORDS ARE TRUE AND FAITHFUL.

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Thus ends our review, and we are comforted to realize that greater characters than we, have needed God's second chance and thus have *opportunities unlimited* to rise from the depths of failure to heights of glorious achievement.

The lesson throughout: If divine forgiveness be so vast and boundless, how can human forgiveness be so dwarfed and shriveled? If we have needed God's forgiveness and His second chance, shall He not grant it to our fellow men? "Shall I forgive my brother until seven times?" queried the seemingly bighearted Peter. "Until seventy times seven," replied the greaterhearted Master!

The Gift

Soon in your hand will be placed a priceless gift. Look at it closely. There is no price mark stamped on it. It cannot be weighed, because no scale can balance its value. A king's ransom in comparison is as nothing, yet it is given to beggar and prince alike. The Giver asks only that it be used wisely and well.

This jewel, rare and unique, is not displayed in any shop window. It cannot be purchased, cannot be sold. No other treasure holds the possibilities this gift offers—none can surpass its golden splendor.

Of all gifts this is the most precious. It has been offered many times before; today, from the depths of a boundless love it will be given again. It will be left to you to find the golden thread running through it. Only with great care will the jewel retain its luster. Carelessness, ingratitude, and selfishness will tarnish the brilliancy, break the unspoiled thread, mar the perfection.

Guard it closely, lest through weak fingers it slip from the hand. Look often at its faultless beauty. Accept it as it is offered from the heart of the Giver. Consider it the most treasured of possessions, for of all gifts it is by far the greatest. It is the gift of the New Year!

A Tale of Two Springtimes

(Continued from page 11)

It was not easy to find one that would risk his life for another's flock. A shepherd's life was not easy. He had to be continually on the watch against wild beasts and robbers.

Asher, upon hearing Reuben's story, offered to care for his flock while he hastened to Jerusalem. Upon arrival, he was told that Jesus had gone to the next village. Reuben hurried thence, but again he failed to find the Messiah.

"Yes," the people said, He had been there, but He had disappeared, they knew not where.

Disappointed, Reuben returned to care for his sheep, but even among the hills, news reached him of the growing wonder of the Prophet. Rumors were abroad that He had healed a blind man; another told of His making the lame to walk. He cured the dreaded leprosy—and had even raised a dead man . . . A greater longing filled Reuben's heart. "But," thought he, "perhaps, another year our paths will cross, and I may be so blessed as to meet Him, the healing Teacher."

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The grazing season was over and Reuben gathered his flock for the homeward journey. How eagerly they responded to his call. Carefully he counted and recounted to see that none were missing.

When Reuben came in sight of home, his own little Reuben ran to meet him as he himself had done when at the same age. Following him to the sheepfold, the boy chattered happily, staying close by his father's side. Returning to the house, Rebecca, his wife, happily greeted him at the door.

As the evening shadows gathered, a weary Stranger stopped and asked for a cup of cold water. He was warmly received into their home and asked to share their humble meal.

As they listened to the gracious words that flowed from the Stranger's lips Reuben's eagerness grew to wonder and heartfelt thanksgiving—for this was He!—the Galilean, Himself! Reuben, son of one of the favored shepherd's on the auspicious night long ago, knew that this was He at whose birth the angels had sung.

God had granted the longings of his heart. The Master had come to their home and shared their humble meal! He had filled their hearts with a vehement desire to share the kingdom with Him.

The Master's heart rejoiced as Reuben exclaimed with the noble Joshua, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord!"

A year of self-surrender will bring larger blessings than fourscore years of selfishness.

Children's Page

A Tale of Two Springtimes

LITTLE REUBEN carefully placed his armload of sticks by the clay oven and ran into their poor but spotlessly clean hut. Climbing upon a stool beside his mother, he asked for the tenth time, "Mother, will Father come soon?"

Mother looked patiently into the eager little face. She knew that this was a big event in Reuben's young life. He had not seen his father since he had led the sheep from the fold to pasture them in the open fields among the distant hills. From time to time, they had heard from him through a kind neighbor, who carried fresh supplies of food to him.

This morning, neighbor Nathaniel had brought the exciting news that Father would soon be home. Little Reuben could hardly wait to see him.

"Do you think he will remember me?" he asked anxiously. To Reuben, three weeks seemed a very long time. Mother smoothed the tumbled locks of hair and hiding a smile, answered gravely, "Yes, Reuben, I am sure Father will remember you."

Neighbor Nathaniel had promised Reuben that on his next trip he would take him to see his father. "I would like to take you soon, so you may see the beauty of the Judean hillsides in spring; they look like a big flower garden; there are so many beautiful flowers, even a small child cannot walk without stepping on them."

But alas, when the day arrived for their departure, Reuben was sick and was unable to accompany his friend. It was a heartbroken little boy that tossed with fever on his sleeping mat.

Sarah, Reuben's mother, was a devout believer in God's Word and she diligently taught her son the Law and the Prophets. She spoke much about a Messiah, a promised Redeemer who would bring in a righteous reign that would last for ever. In glowing words, she had often told him that when this great King comes, the earth shall be filled with beauty and glory; no one will ever be sick and every one in His Kingdom will live for ever. Often with a gentle sigh, she would say, "It must be very soon now that the Messiah will come to deliver us, our people have waited long, long years, Reuben."

As Reuben repeated his lesson again and again, his eyes rested upon the winding road. Suddenly a tall, straight figure rounded the bend; with a joyful cry, Reuben slipped from the stool and ran to meet his father. Jacob tenderly gathered the excited child in his strong arms.

His father's face shone as Reuben had never remembered seeing it shine before. He squeezed his little son tighter as he pressed a loving kiss on the lad's forehead.

Sarah hurried out to meet him. "Jacob, what has happened?" she asked as he tried to control the excitement in his voice.

"Sarah, the Messiah has come at last!" exclaimed Jacob joyfully. "I had never dreamed anything—so great, so—so wonderful could happen to poor, humble shepherds!"

"Tell it to me!" urged Sarah, with mounting excitement.

Then Father told how the sheep had gathered for the night and as the shepherds sat about their campfire, gazing at the slender new moon which ushered in another new year, talking of God's promise to send His people a Deliverer,—something began to happen—the very air was clearer, sweeter—a bright light shone about them, and a beautiful angel appeared in the air above them, and said to the trembling shepherds, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." As he finished, the heavens were filled with angels! They were singing the most beautiful music ever heard on earth. They sang "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Then all was quiet again and Jacob and the other shepherds were gazing once more at the moon and the twinkling stars . . . In wonder they talked of what they had seen and heard. Should they leave their flocks to go and seek the Christ-child? Yes, they would leave

them and hasten to Bethlehem. There they found the Babe in a manger.

"Just think of it Sarah, the long promised Messiah born in a stable!"

"You saw Him—you saw the Messiah?" asked Sarah breathlessly.

"Yes!" said Jacob. "I will never forget what I saw. I can see those angels and hear that heavenly music now—and to think we have seen the future King of all the earth!"

Reuben listened in wide-eyed wonder. He knew something wonderful had happened. His mother's face glowed with excitement as Father told her the happenings of that night. He did not understand it all, but they were talking about angels singing in the heavens, that the promised Messiah had at last come, about a Babe born in a manger. Reuben was not even reminded that it was time he was upon his sleeping mat.

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The springs came—and the springs went, bringing new joys and sorrows, but little change in the manner of life of the villagers amid the beautiful Judean hills.

Reuben grew to manhood and became a shepherd like his father. His cousin Asher was also a shepherd and the two pastured their flocks among the same hills.

As was the custom of shepherds, Asher and Reuben gathered their flocks together as dusk descended over another spring clad country-side. "Your turn tonight" said Asher sleepily drawing his cloak about him. Reuben stationed himself where he could see the entire flock and the night vigil began.

Tonight his thoughts turned to the Messiah. Some thirty years ago, angels had announced His birth. What had become of Him? He had heard rumors that a young boy, not yet in his teens, had disputed in the temple with the learned doctors and they marveled at his knowledge. Perhaps this was the Messiah; but the years passed and nothing more was heard of Him. Recently Reuben heard much about a young prophet who went from one village to another, preaching. He claimed that He was the Messiah or the Christ.

Suddenly Reuben was startled from his reverie by a pair of eyes gleaming in the darkness. Taking a firmer grasp on his staff, he hastened to the place. A hungry wolf was greedily eyeing a fat lamb. Reuben lifted his staff to strike. With bared fangs, the beast sprang at his throat. Reuben jumped aside but the wolf caught him by the shoulder, tearing his smock. Again the wolf attacked; with all his strength, Reuben struck him over the head, his knotted staff being an effective weapon; snarling viciously, the injured animal slunk away into the darkness. Rubbing his shoulder to ease the smarting scratches, the shepherd thanked God for his deliverance.

At the first glimmer of dawn, the sheep became restless, anxious to be on the way to fresh pasture land. Reuben awakened Asher and in a short time they were slowly leading their flocks up the mountain-side.

"Look!" exclaimed Reuben, pointing to a road in the distance. "What could be the cause of that great multitude?"

"It must be a rich man's funeral procession," answered Asher. "You rest here with the flocks and I will ask a passerby the meaning of this."

Reuben watched the multitude disappear in the distance as his cousin bounded down the mountainside, with movement as agile as a mountain goat. A short time later, Asher threw himself, panting on the grass. "It was the great Shepherd of men," he said when he could catch enough breath to speak.

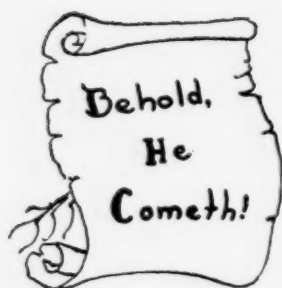
"You mean the Messiah?" asked Reuben, in great surprise.

"Yes, He is traveling to the next village."

"Oh," moaned Reuben disappointed. "We have missed seeing Him—and when He was so close! How I long to talk with Him!"

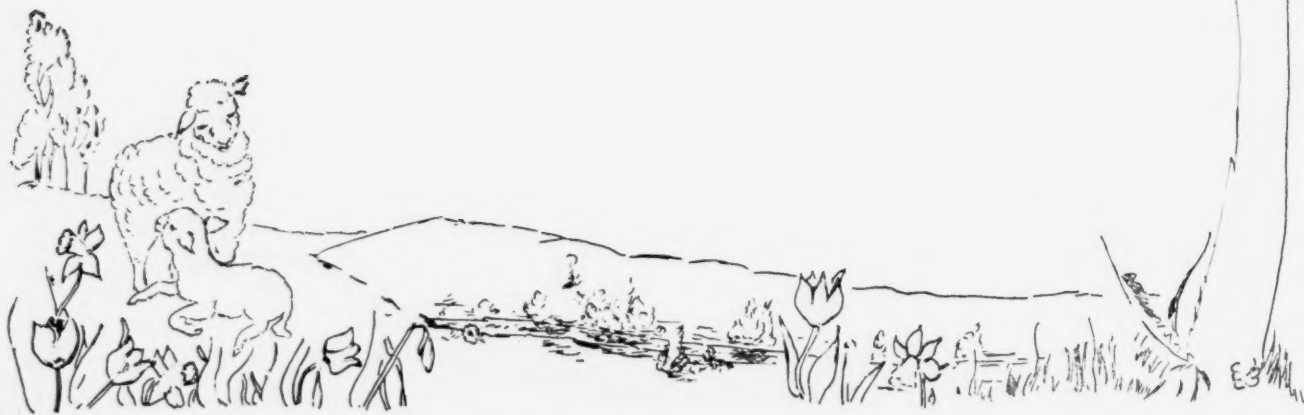
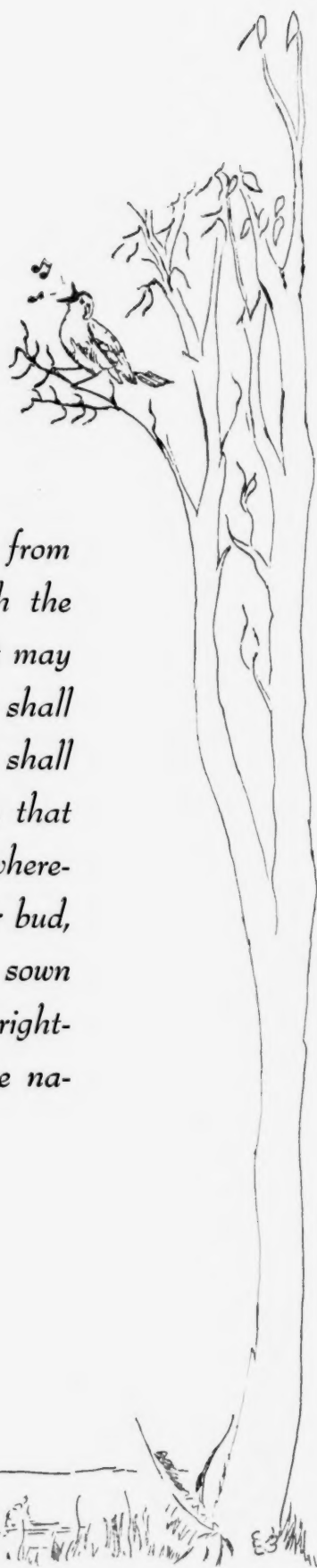
Although Reuben longed to meet Him, most of his time must be spent among the hills protecting his sheep from wolves and robbers.

(Continued on page 10)



Divine Promise

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it . . . For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations."--Isa. 55: 10, 11; 61: 11.



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